



Kentucky Personnel Cabinet Office of the Secretary

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Personnel Cabinet supports state wellness goals

Kentucky Employees' Health Plan offers wellness incentives, tobacco cessation programs

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 23, 2015) – Just a year ago, Katie Hanly literally made a life-changing move. She and her family moved to downtown Frankfort, and she decided to take advantage of the wellness opportunities in the area. She began walking regularly, and exercising at downtown venues like the YMCA and a local yoga studio. She also joined the Frankfort Striders running club.

She didn't want to smoke in her new home, and decided to make a commitment to quit. "I had the entire arsenal," she said, which included nicotine patches, medication and electronic cigarettes. "Nothing in itself worked, except running. I had to replace smoking with something else, and that was running."

The Kentucky Employees' Health Plan has options that take the wellness efforts of participants like Hanly into account, and gives them incentives to get healthy and stay healthy. Wellness options have been available for several years. This year, 86 percent of eligible employees chose one of the plans, up from 81 percent last year. KEHP members include employees of state agencies, school boards and local government, as well as retirees under age 65, and their dependents.

LivingWell plans have the same or higher monthly rate than the standard plans, but they provide lower coinsurance, deductibles and out-of-pocket maximums to members. In return, plan holders are asked to make a "LivingWell Promise" and be more engaged and proactive in their health and wellness. HumanaVitality, part of LivingWell, is a data-driven wellness and rewards program, designed to motivate members to make healthier choices. "Recently I was able to get the iPad mini and a leather case for free and I've gotten other free things and won a couple of jackpot drawings [through HumanaVitality]," Hanly said.

Members begin their participation in HumanaVitality by completing a health assessment – about 30 lifestyle questions – which provides a general overview of the member's health status and a personalized plan of action to improve or maintain good health. A recent HumanaVitality study found improved health (as shown through lower health care costs and

fewer unscheduled absences) among associates who actively participated in the program.

While the KEHP vendor has changed from Humana to Anthem this year, the HumanaVitality program has stayed in place. KEHP has also added the option of fulfilling the LivingWell Promise by taking a biometric screening, which provides a more detailed health status.

The LivingWell plans go hand-in-hand with Governor Steve Beshear's recently created initiative, kyhealthnow, which aims to reduce Kentucky's dismal health rankings and habits through goals and strategies related to seven areas that include obesity, cancer and health insurance.

The Kentucky Personnel Cabinet and the Kentucky Department of Education have also leveraged HumanaVitality to provide more incentives to schools to be physically active. Students with Active Role Models (SWARM) utilizes HumanaVitality to support local school wellness policies and meet the recommendations of the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP). Through the SWARM initiative, teachers and staff who participate with their students in physical activity throughout the school year will gain additional Vitality Points and rewards.

Additionally, KEHP offers many resources for tobacco cessation efforts, in support of Gov. Beshear's tobacco-free policy, which went into effect on state properties in November. KEHP resources include: A personal health coach, cessation classes, nicotine replacement therapies and incentives for getting healthier. These and many other resources, including Kentucky's own quit line – 1-800-QuitNow – can be found on the tobacco-free.ky.gov website.

For more information on the Personnel Cabinet's LivingWell program, visit LivingWell.ky.gov. For KEHP member information, visit KEHP.ky.gov. For more information about SWARM, including submission forms and activity calendars to use in classrooms, visit LivingWell.ky.gov, click on Wellness Champs and then School Champs.

Hanly has some advice for anyone who wants to make some healthy changes this year: "The longer you go, I think the easier it is," she said. "You gain confidence and each day is reinforcement for the next."

CUTLINES:

Photo 1

Katie Hanly (left, standing) and Ella Stumbo volunteer at the Frankfort Striders run club charity trail race at Capital View Park in 2014.

Photo 2

(From left to right) Amanda Hargis, Katie Hanly, Halle Moon Simons, and Leah Rome participated in the Let's Play 3k in Bridgeport recently. Katie Hanly placed second in her age group.

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